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Opinion 1

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Clara Barton 'needs' \$26,000

ON NOV. 25 you carried an editorial. "She's finally in," concerned with Clara Barton's election to the Hall of Fame for Great Americans.

Earlier, on Nov. 15, a D&C news story, "Miss Barton in Hall" included this paragraph:

"Miss Barton's diary, on file in the Library of Congress at Washington, D.C., tells of the rigors of this travel. In order to start a bank account for the Red Cross Society, as it was called then, she traveled 60 miles by horse-drawn vehicle from Dansville to Rochester, where she opened the account at the Monroe County Savings Bank with a \$55 contribution by a group of Rochester citizens."

I was appalled at the idea of Miss Barton traveling 60 miles "by horse-drawn vehicle" from Dansville to Rochester. The railroad up the Genesee and Casaseraga Valleys had been completed by 1872; therefore, in 1881, when she traveled from Dansville to Rochester, train service was certainly available.

MOREOVER, her mission was not, as stated, "to start a bank account for the Red

Cross Society," but to address (by invitation) an Oct. 1 meeting of Rochester citizens — including her friend, Susan B. Anthony — on the Red Cross in relation to disaster relief, specifically relief of sufferers from the recent Michigan forest fires.

Miss Barton remained in Rochester for an organizational meeting on Oct. 3, then went on to Syracuse to help people there organize a third local society. (The first had been formed in Dansville Aug. 22). From Syracuse she traveled to New York City, thence to New Haven, Conn., where she stayed from Oct. 8 to 24, working on Red Cross promotion, aided by her friends, Judge and Mrs. Joseph Sheldon, whose guest she was.

From Oct. 24 to 31, Miss Barton was in Washington; on Nov. 1 she returned to Dansville via Elmira and Wayland on the Erie; stagecoach from there. (The Lackawanna ran trains as far as Mt. Morris the next year, 1882)

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All evidence indicates that she was too much "on the go" during the first week in October to find time for her diary — the first entry being on Oct. 8, when she reached New Haven.

IT IS A satisfaction to have Clara Barton elected to the Hall of Fame in New York (she had already been chosen to the Women's Hall of Fame at Eisenhower College, Seneca Falls). However, in order to have a bronze bust placed in the niche reserved for it, with an accompanying plaque, "an estimated \$26,000" must be provided. This word was received from the New York office of the Hall's executive director, Dr. Jerry Grundfest.

The American Red Cross, of course, cannot spend money for such a purpose. So if you know any benevolent millionaires, please use your influence!

WILLIAM D. CONKLIN, Dansville

Bible Passage

YE HAVE not chosen me, but I have chosen you. — John 15:16